

# THE REFORMER.

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth.—*Jeremiah*, v. 1.

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[Mr. Johnson, of Kentucky, has again presented a very able and lucid Report on the subject of the petitions for stopping the Mails on Sunday. It must, we think, satisfy every reasoning and reflecting individual of the impropriety and unconstitutionality of legislating on *disputed points of religious obligation*, and of the bearing and tendency of such a measure on the rights and liberties of the people.]

## CONGRESS.

*House of Representatives—March 5, 1830.*

## SUNDAY MAIL.

Mr. Johnson of Kentucky, from the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom had been referred petitions and remonstrances against the transportation and opening of the public mail on the Sabbath day, made the following

## REPORT.

*The Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, to whom the Memorials were referred for prohibiting the transportation of Mails, and the opening of Post Offices, on Sunday, Report:*

That the memorialists, regard the first day of the week as a day set apart by the Creator for religious exercises; and consider the transportation of the mail, and the opening of the post offices on that day, the violation of a religious duty, and call for a suppression of the practice. Others, by counter-memorials, are known to entertain a different sentiment, believing that no one day of the week is holier than another. Others, holding the universality and immutability of the Jewish decalogue, believe in the sanctity of the seventh day of the week as a day of religious devotion; and by their memorial, now before the committee, they also request that it may be set apart

for religious purposes. Each has hitherto been left to the exercise of his own opinion; and it has been regarded as the proper business of Government to protect all, and determine for none. But the attempt is now made to bring about a greater uniformity, at least, in practice; and, as argument has failed, the Government has been called upon to interpose its authority to settle the controversy.

Congress acts under a constitution of delegated and limited powers. The committee look in vain to that instrument for a delegation of power authorizing this body to inquire and determine what part of time, or whether any, has been set apart by the Almighty for religious exercises. On the contrary, among the few prohibitions which it contains, is one that prohibits a religious test; and another, which declares that Congress shall pass no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The committee might here rest the argument, upon the ground that the question referred to them does not come within the cognizance of Congress; but the perseverance and zeal with which the memorialists pursue their object, seems to require a further elucidation of the subject. And, as the opposers of Sunday mails disclaim all intention to unite church and state, the committee do not feel disposed to impugn their motives; and whatever may be advanced in opposition to the measure, will arise from the fears entertained of its fatal tendency to the peace and happiness of the nation. The catastrophe of other nations furnished the framers of the constitution a beacon of awful warning, and they have evinced the great-

est possible care in guarding against the same evil.

The law, as it now exists, makes no distinction as to the days of the week, but it is imperative that the Postmasters shall attend at all reasonable hours, in every day, to perform the duties of their offices; and the Postmaster General has given his instructions to all Postmasters, that, at post offices, where the mail arrives on Sunday, the office is to be kept open one hour, or more, after the arrival and assorting the mail; but in case that would interfere with the hours of public worship, the office is to be kept open for one hour after the usual time of dissolving the meeting. This liberal construction of the law does not satisfy the memorialists. But the committee believe that there is not just ground of complaint, unless it be conceded that they have a controlling power over the consciences of others. If Congress shall, by the authority of law, sanction the measure recommended, it would constitute a legislative decision of a religious controversy, in which even Christians, themselves, are at issue.—However suited such a decision may be to an ecclesiastical council, it is incompatible with a republican legislature, which is purely for political, and not religious purposes.

In our individual character, we all entertain opinions, and pursue a corresponding practice upon the subject of religion. However diversified these may be, we all harmonize as citizens, while each is willing that the other shall enjoy the same liberty which he claims for himself. But in our representative character, our individual character is lost. The individual acts for himself; the representative for his constituents. He is chosen to represent their *political*, and not their *religious* views—to guard the rights of man; not to restrict the rights of conscience. Despots may regard their subjects as their property, and usurp the divine prerogative of prescribing their religious faith.

But the history of the world furnishes the melancholy demonstration, that the disposition of one man to coerce the religious homage of another, springs from an unchastened ambition, rather than a sincere devotion to any religion. The principles of our Government do not recognize in the majority, any authority over the minority, except in matters which regard the conduct of man to his fellow man. A Jewish monarch by grasping the holy censer, lost both his sceptre and his freedom; a destiny as little to be envied may be the lot of the American people, who hold the sovereignty of power, if they, in the person of their representatives, shall attempt to unite, in the most remote degree, Church and State.

From the earliest period of time, religious teachers have attained great ascendancy over the minds of the people; and in every nation, ancient or modern, whether Pagan, Mohamedan, or Christian, have succeeded in the incorporation of their religious tenets with the political institutions of their country. The Persian idols, the German oracles, the Roman auguries, and the modern priesthood of Europe, have all, in their turn, been the subjects of popular adulation, and the agents of political deception. If the measure recommended should be adopted, it would be difficult for human sagacity to foresee how rapid would be the succession, or how numerous the train of measures which might follow, involving the dearest rights of all—the rights of conscience. It is perhaps fortunate for our country, that the proposition should have been made at this early period, while the spirit of the revolution yet exists in full vigor. Religious zeal enlists the strongest prejudices of the human mind; and, when misdirected, excites the worst passions of our nature, under the delusive pretext of doing God service.—Nothing so infuriates the heart to deeds of rapine and blood; nothing is so incessant in its toils; so persevering in its determinations; so appalling in its course;



or so dangerous in its consequences. The equality of rights secured by the constitution, may bid defiance to mere political tyrants; but the robe of sanctity too often glitters to deceive. The constitution regards the conscience of the Jew as sacred as that of the Christian; and gives no more authority to adopt a measure affecting the conscience of a solitary individual, than that of a whole community. That representative who would violate this principle, would lose his delegated character, and forfeit the confidence of his constituents. If Congress shall declare the first day of the week holy, it will not convince the Jew nor the Sabbatarian. It will dissatisfy both; and, consequently, convert neither. Human power may extort vain sacrifices; but Deity alone can command the affections of the heart. It must be recollected that, in the earliest settlement of this country, the spirit of persecution which drove the pilgrims from their native home, was brought with them to their new habitations; and that some Christians were scourged, and others put to death, for no other crime than dissenting from the dogmas of their rules.

With these facts before us, it must be a subject of deep regret, that a question would be brought before Congress, which involves the dearest privileges of the constitution, and even by those who enjoy its choicest blessings. We should all recollect that Cataline, a professed patriot, was a traitor to Rome; Arnold, a professed whig, was a traitor to America; and Judas, a professed disciple, was a traitor to his Divine Master.

With the exception of the United States, the whole human race, consisting it is supposed of eight hundred millions of rational human beings, is in religious bondage; and in reviewing the scenes of persecution which history every where presents, unless the committee could believe that the cries of the burning victim, and the flames by which he is consumed, bear to hea-

ven a grateful incense, the conclusion is inevitable, that the line cannot be too strongly drawn between Church and State. If a solemn act of legislation shall, in *one* point, define the law of God, or point out to the citizen one religious duty, it may with equal propriety define *every* part of divine revelation, and enforce *every* religious obligation, even to the forms and ceremonies of worship, the endowment of the church, and the support of the clergy.

It was with a kiss that Judas betrayed his Divine Master, and we should all be admonished, no matter what our faith may be, that the rights of conscience cannot be so successfully assailed as under the pretext of holiness. The Christian religion made its way into the world in opposition to all human governments. Banishment, tortures and death were inflicted in vain to stop its progress. But many of its professors, as soon as clothed with political power, lost the meek spirit which their creed inculcated, and began to inflict on other religions, and on dissenting sects of their own religion, persecutions more aggravated than those which their own apostles had endured. The ten persecutions of Pagan Emperors were exceeded in atrocity by the massacres and murders perpetrated by Christian hands; and in vain shall we examine the records of imperial tyranny for an engine of cruelty equal to the *Holy Inquisition*. Every religious sect, however meek in its origin, commenced the work of persecution as soon as it acquired political power. The framers of the constitution recognized the eternal principle, that man's relation with his God is above human legislation, and his rights of conscience unalienable. Reasoning was not necessary to establish this truth: we are conscious of it in our own bosoms. It is this consciousness which, in defiance of human laws, has sustained so many martyrs in tortures and in flame. They *felt* that their duty to God was superior to human

enactment, and that man could exercise no authority over their consciences: it is an inborn principle which nothing can eradicate.

The bigot, in the pride of his authority, may lose sight of it—but strip him of his power; prescribe a faith to him which his conscience rejects; threaten him in turn with the dungeon and the faggot; and the spirit which God has implanted in him, rises up in rebellion and defies you. Did the primitive Christian ask that Government should recognize and observe their religious institutions? All they asked was *toleration*; all they complained of was persecution. What did the Protestants of Germany, or the Huguenots of France, ask of their Catholic superiors? *Toleration*. What do the persecuted Catholics of Ireland ask of their oppressors? *Toleration*.

Do not all men in this country enjoy every religious right which martyrs and saints ever asked? Whence then, the voice of complaint? Who is it, that, in the full enjoyment of every principle which human laws can secure, wishes to wrest a portion of these principles from his neighbour? Do the petitioners allege that they cannot conscientiously participate in the profits of the mail contracts and post offices, because the mail is carried on Sunday? If this be their motive, then it is worldly gain which stimulates to action, and not virtue or religion. Do they complain that men, less conscientious in relation to the Sabbath, obtain advantages over them by receiving their letters, and attending to their contents? Still their motive is worldly and selfish. But if their motive be to induce Congress to sanction by law their *religious opinions* and *observances*, then their efforts are to be resisted, as in their tendency fatal both to religious and political freedom.—Why have the petitioners confined their prayer to the mails? Why have they not requested that the Government may be required to suspend *all* its executive functions on that day?

Why do they not require us to enact that our ships shall not sail—that our armies shall not march—that officers of justice shall not seize the suspected, or guard the convicted? They seem to forget that Government is as necessary on Sunday as on any other day of the week. The spirit of evil does not rest on that day. It is the Government, ever active in its functions, which enables us all, even the petitioners, to worship in our churches in peace. Our Government furnishes very few blessings like our mails. They bear, from the centre of our republic to its distant extremes, the acts of our legislative bodies, the decisions of the judiciary, and the orders of the Executive. Their speed is often essential to the defence of the country, the suppression of crime, and the dearest interests of the people. Were they suppressed one day of the week, their absence must be often supplied by public expresses, and, besides, while the mail bags might rest, the mail coaches would pursue their journey with the passengers.—The mail bears, from one extreme of the Union to the other, letters of relatives and friends, preserving a communion of heart between those far separated, and increasing the most pure and refined pleasures of our existence; also, the letters of commercial men convey the state of the markets, prevent ruinous speculations, and promote general as well as individual interest; they bear innumerable religious letters, newspapers, magazines, and tracts, which reach almost every house throughout this wide republic. Is the conveyance of these a violation of the Sabbath? The advance of the human race in intelligence, in virtue, and religion itself, depends in part upon the speed with which a knowledge of the past is disseminated.—Without an interchange between one country and another, and between different sections of the same country, every improvement in moral or political science, and the arts of life, would be confined to the neighbourhood where



it originated. The more rapid and the more frequent this interchange, the more rapid will be the march of intellect, and the progress of improvement. The mail is the chief means by which intellectual light irradiates to the extremes of the Republic. Stop it one day in seven, and you retard one seventh the advancement of our country. So far from stopping the mail on Sunday, the committee would recommend the use of all reasonable means to give it a greater expedition and a greater extension. What would be the elevation of our country, if every new conception could be made to strike every mind in the Union at the same time? It is not the distance of a province or state from the seat of Government which endangers its separation, but it is the difficulty and unfrequency of intercourse between them. Our mails reach Missouri and Arkansas in less time than they reached Kentucky and Ohio in the infancy of their settlements; and now, when there are three millions of people extending a thousand miles west of the Alleghany, we hear less of discontent, than when there were a few thousand scattered along their western base.

To stop the mails one day in seven, would be to thrust the whole Western country, and other distant parts of this Republic, one day's journey from the seat of Government. But, were it expedient to put an end to the transmission of letters and newspapers on Sunday, because it violates the law of God, have not the petitioners begun wrong in their efforts? If the arm of Government be necessary to compel man to respect and obey the laws of God, do not the State Governments possess infinitely more power in this respect? Let the petitioners turn to *them*, and see if they can induce the passage of laws to respect the observance of the Sabbath; for, if it be sinful for the mail to carry letters on Sunday, it must be equally sinful for individuals to write, carry, receive, or read them. It would seem to require that these

acts should be made penal, to complete the system. Travelling on business or recreation, except to and from church; all printing, carrying, receiving, and reading of newspapers; all conversations and social intercourse, except upon religious subjects, must necessarily be punished, to suppress the evil. Would it not also follow, as an inevitable consequence, that every man, woman, and child, should be compelled to attend meeting? and, as only one sect, in the opinion of some, can be deemed orthodox, must it not be determined, by law, which *that* is, and compel all to hear those teachers, and contribute to their support? If minor punishments would not restrain the Jew, or the Sabbatarian, or the Infidel, who believes Saturday to be the Sabbath, or disbelieves the whole, would not the same system require that we should resort to imprisonment, banishment, the rack, and the faggot, to force men to violate their own consciences, or compel them to listen to doctrines which they abhor? When the State Governments shall have yielded to these measures, it will be time enough for Congress to declare that the rattling of the mail coaches shall no longer break the silence of this despotism. It is the duty of this Government to afford to *all*—to Jew or Gentile, Pagan or Christian, the protection and the advantages of our benignant institutions, on *Sunday*, as well as every day of the week. Although this government will not convert itself into an ecclesiastical tribunal, it will practise upon the maxim laid down by the founder of Christianity—that it is lawful to do *good* on the Sabbath day. If the Almighty has set apart the first day of the week as time which man is bound to keep holy, and devote exclusively to his worship, would it not be more congenial to the precepts of Christians, to appeal exclusively to the Great Lawgiver of the Universe to aid them in making men better—in correcting their practices by purifying their hearts?—Government will protect them in their

efforts. When they shall have so instructed the public mind, and awakened the consciences of individuals, as to make them believe that it is a violation of God's law to carry the mail, open post offices, or receive letters on Sunday, the evil of which they complain will cease of itself, without any exertion of the strong arm of civil power. When man undertakes to be God's avenger, he becomes a demon. Driven by the frenzy of a religious zeal, he loses every gentle feeling, forgets the more sacred precepts of his creed, and becomes ferocious and unrelenting.

Our fathers did not wait to be oppressed, when the mother country asserted and exercised an unconstitutional power over them. To have acquiesced in the tax of three pence upon a pound of tea, would have led the way to the most cruel exactions; they took a bold stand against the principle, and liberty and independence was the result. The petitioners have not requested Congress to suppress Sunday mails upon the ground of political expediency, but because they violate the sanctity of the first day of the week.

This being the fact, and the petitioners having indignantly disclaimed even the wish to unite politics and religion, may not the committee reasonably cherish the hope, that they will feel reconciled to its decision, in the case; especially, as it is also a fact, that the counter-memorials, equally respectable, oppose the interference of Congress, upon the ground that it would be legislating upon a religious subject, and therefore unconstitutional.

*Resolved*, That the committee be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

[From the New York Gospel Luminary.]

#### WHAT NEXT?

At a public meeting held a short time since, at No. 929 $\frac{1}{2}$  Broadway, some resolves were passed which we think are well calculated to open peo-

ple's eyes. We hope that the party who are now so anxious to establish a Sabbath test, will continue to speak their minds freely. Such language as will be found below, we think will do more towards opening the eyes of the public, than a hundred opposite arguments.

After resolving approbation to the petitions relative to Sunday Mails, the meeting resolved, that it is expedient to petition the legislature of this State to pass a law, to prevent public and private carriages from running in the city, either from church or otherwise, on the first day of the week, as they term it, "to the great annoyance of all true Christians!" We would simply remark on this point, that there are several different religious societies in the city of New York, which are made up of people who reside in all parts of the city. We believe there are those who attend statedly at the Christian chapel in Broome-street, who come several miles. Now must these be deprived of using carriages to and from meeting, because certain of the Presbyterians say it "is to the great annoyance of all true Christians?" A sweeping charge indeed! and as false as it is impudent. The above is however light compared with the following resolve, passed at the same meeting:

"*Resolved*, That we look at the suggestions made by the Jews and Seventh-day Baptists, to petition Congress to stop the Mails from running, and Post offices opening on the *seventh day* as perfectly *ridiculous*, and even if it were just and right that their petition should receive notice, that their numbers are too *ridiculous to possess the rights of citizens*; or if possessing them they are so small a minority, that they can do no harm, and therefore *should be treated with contempt!*" Now admitting that the Jews and Seventh-day Baptists are a small minority, does this deprive them of the rights of citizens? Is such the language of republicanism, which says, "all men are born *free and equal*?"



Merely because they are few in numbers in this country compared with the Presbyterians, should they "be treated with contempt?" May the God of heaven avert the evils which surely will grow out of this intolerant spirit, if suffered to control our National Legislature.

### THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

A writer in the *Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal*, printed at Wilkesbarre, Pa. under the signature of "A Primitive Christian," thus concludes an article on the subject of stopping the Mails on Sunday.

"As to the religious keeping of the first day of the week being a Christian observance, for my part I believe most firmly, that it is a corruption of Christianity, so to say—at least the observance of it as a day of entire abstinence from the common pursuits of life—a corruption introduced when the Church came to be connected with the State. Paul says, One man esteemeth one day above another, and another esteemeth every day alike: but of this, he says, he would have every man persuaded in his own mind. He does not say that he would have every man observe the first, or the seventh, or any other day of the week. I remember reading also in some of the letters of the Governor of one of the Roman provinces, in the early ages of the Christian church, to the then Emperor, that in giving an account of the new religious sect, (the Christians) who were at that time beginning to spread themselves in different parts of the Roman Empire, he says, they were a peaceable, industrious, quiet people, who went about their own business, and who sometimes met on the first day of the week to talk of their common affairs, and on separating, returned quietly and soberly to their usual avocations and pursuits.

"The only book, however, which I have access to at present containing direct evidence of this, is Blackstone's Commentaries; which of itself, however, is as sufficient authority as a whole host of other testimony to that effect would be, even if I had access to the books containing it. Speaking of the days and time when courts were held, he shows that until the year 517, or the early part of the sixth century of the Christian era, courts were held and judicial business transacted, on

Sundays equally as on the other days of the week, as also on all the festivals and other holy days then or now observed in different Christian churches.

"Throughout all christendom," he says, 'in very early times, the whole year was one continual term for hearing and deciding causes. For the Christian magistrates, to distinguish themselves from the heathens, who were extremely superstitious in the observation of their *dies fasti et nefasti*, [favourable and unfavourable, or happy and unhappy days] went into a contrary extreme, and administered justice upon all days alike. Till at length the church interposed, and exempted certain holy seasons from being profaned by the tumult of forensic litigations. As, particularly, the time of Advent and Christmas, which gave rise to the winter vacation; the time of Lent and Easter, which created that in the spring; the time of Pentecost, which produced the third; and the long vacation, between midsummer and michaelmas, which was allowed for the hay time and harvest. All Sundays also, and some peculiar festivals, as the days of Purification, Ascension, and some others, were included in the same prohibition; which was established by a canon of the church, A. D. 517, and was fortified by an imperial constitution of the younger Theodosius, comprised in the Theodosian code.'

"Sir William, living in the midst of an established clergy of overwhelming power and influence, has glossed over, as well as he could, these innovations and corruptions of the church, but it cannot be disguised, that in the early and purest ages of Christianity, the keeping of Sundays, or any other holy days, formed no part of that religion, but rather otherwise. I would, therefore, that all sects, more in accordance with pure and primitive Christianity, and with the liberal and enlightened spirit of the age, would count every day alike: at all events that they would not endeavour to enforce their religious observances upon others, or to have them enacted and established by Government, to the disadvantage and disparagement, as well as in opposition to the will, of their fellow citizens who differ from them in religious opinion. If necessary, you shall hear again from

A PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN."

It is in vain for any one to pretend that the observance of the first day of the week, as a Sabbath, constituted any part of the belief or practice of

the Primitive Christians. Indeed it is only within a few centuries, that the first day of the week, or Sunday, was ever called the Sabbath in any part of the Christian world; nor has it yet ever been so called by any of the churches on the continent of Europe, or in the standards and rituals of the Church of England; for the learned, and those acquainted with church history belonging to these more ancient churches, well know that there is no scriptural authority or example from the early Christians, to authorize calling the first day of the week a Sabbath, or for observing it as such. And how much soever many of these churches may have departed from the purity and simplicity of the Gospel in other respects, it seems they will not act so inconsistent with honesty as to pretend that Sunday, or the first day of the week, should be considered as a Sabbath.

So far indeed was Sunday from being considered any substitution for the Jewish Sabbath, in the early periods of the Christian church, that Christians were exhorted to work on that day the same as on other days, and if any clergyman was found fasting on Sunday, or on the Jewish Sabbath, he was to be suspended. (*See Canon 66. Apost.*) St. Ignatius speaks of such as fast on the Jewish Sabbath, or on the first day of the week, except before Easter, as *murdering Christ again*. In St. Jerome's time, we are told the Christians, after assembling for worship on the first day of the week, followed their daily employments. Paula, a devout lady in Jerome's time, is represented by him, after coming from meeting on the first day of the week, as sitting down with the virgins and widows attending her, to their daily tasks, which consisted in making garments; and as doing this on that day for *themselves*, as well as for others that needed them. (*See Morer's Dialogues on keeping Sunday.*) St. Chrisostom, another celebrated Father in the church, gives leave to his audi-

ence, after impressing on themselves and their families what they had heard on the first day of the week, to return to their daily employments and trades. Ignatius, indeed, agreeably to Bishop White, (a learned Bishop of the Church of England, who wrote concerning the observance of Sunday in 1635) exhorts the Christians to work on the first day of the week, quoting the Apostle's words, "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat." And this is no more than what Bishop White shows the early Christian Fathers in general to have done, relative to the first day, not only while the Christians were subject to the idolaters, but for three centuries after the Roman empire became Christian.

We are informed by Mr. Burnside, that in England, so late as Richard the Second's reign, about 1380, the Parliament met on Sundays to transact business. It was not, indeed, until the rise of the Puritans in England, a little more than two centuries ago, that the idea was ever entertained in any part of the Christian world, that Sunday was to be observed as a Sabbath. A writer in a Boston paper, in treating on this subject, remarks: "It is a fact, that it is little more than two hundred years, since the idea was first seriously maintained, in the Christian world, that there was any sort of connexion between the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday. It was first adopted by the Puritans, our ancestors, from whom we have inherited it, but has never been sanctioned by the Greek, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, or English Episcopal churches, nor by Protestant churches on the continent of Europe. The opinion is now confined to a part of the descendants of the Puritans, in the United States, and a portion of the Dissenters, descended from the same stock in England." For a full account of the first origin of keeping Sunday for a Sabbath, see the *Reformer* for August, 1828, page 122.

Neither Luther, nor Calvin, nor any



of the Protestant churches on the continent of Europe, ever considered Sunday as a Sabbath, or any substitution for a Sabbath. Nor is it so considered to this day in any part of the Christian world, except in England and this country, occasioned in the first place, by a book but forth in England by Dr. Bound in 1595, and afterwards revived by one Theophilus Bradbone in 1634, but, who, notwithstanding, after submitting himself to a private conference, as we are told, perceived the unsoundness of his principles, and renounced them. Calvin is very express on the subject of a Sabbath under the Christian dispensation. Speaking of the fourth commandment, he says: "The Fathers frequently call it a *shadowy commandment*, because it contains the external observance of the day, which was abolished with the rest of the figures, at the Advent of Christ." Again, "It was the design of the Heavenly Lawgiver, under the rest of the seventh day to give the people of Israel a figure of the spiritual rest, by which the faithful ought to refrain from their own works in order to leave God to work with them." See *Institutes*, vol. i. page 418.

We should not have said so much on this subject were it not that a portion of the clergy in this country, particularly the Presbyterian, are now making a stalking horse of the observance of a Sabbath to ride into power, and acquire an ascendancy in the affairs of Government. Under these circumstances we have felt it to be a duty to show that neither from the New Testament, nor the example of the Primitive Christians, is there any authority for keeping one day more holy than another. It is for the priesthood to bring some proofs from the New Testament, or the example of the Apostles, in support of keeping a Sabbath under the gospel dispensation, or else obey the command of the Apostle Paul, to *let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*, and not harass the whole country, and fill the

halls of our National Legislature with innumerable petitions, to procure the passage of acts favouring their particular views of religious duty. For ourselves, we would wish to be found in the practice of every Christian requirement; but we have yet to learn, that any real benefit will ever arise to the cause of Christianity, or to the morals of society, by the inventions of men, however plausible they may be made to appear in the eyes of those disposed to receive them.

We set but little value indeed upon any supposed requirement or outward religious observance, if no divine authority can be adduced in its support, well knowing that nothing proceeding from the commandments of men, in matters of religion, will ever be of any real utility to the cause of God or the welfare of men, any more than the *voluntary humility*, and *will-worship*, and *neglecting of the body*, which the Apostle condemned in the Collossians, and *which* things he acknowledged *had indeed a shew of wisdom* and outward piety, but would only *beguile* them from the purity and simplicity of the gospel, *puff up their fleshly minds*, and *spoil them through vain deceit*, after the tradition of men, and the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

The observance of Sunday, as a Sabbath, was brought to this country by the Puritans, in all its strictness; and it is well known with what tenacity men cleave to long established usages in things pertaining to religion, however destitute of divine authority they may be. We are not left without instruction on this point by the words of Christ, viz. "*No man having drunk old wine, straitway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.*" This was said in reference to the following inquiry put to the Saviour: "Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink." Such a circumstance was well calculated to lead those who had been accustomed to fast often, and pray

much, like the Pharisees, to question the piety and holiness of both Christ and his disciples. The Jews in general, indeed, considered these acts of austerity and outward devotion as essential to religion; and they could not see the propriety of their disuse by any who assumed to be the friends and teachers of religion. The words of Christ, before quoted, are in their meaning, as if Christ had said to those who made the inquiry, the following:—It is nothing strange that you should be opposed to, and dislike the disuse of such usages and practices as you have long been in the habit of performing, and for which, by use, you have become partial; it is in accordance with the constitution of your nature, that it should be so, “for no man having drunk old wine, straitway desireth new: for he saith, ‘The old is better.’” It was in agreement with this principle that the Jewish people in our Saviour’s time, thought that fasting and praying a great deal, was the most fit and proper, if not the only way of manifesting religion; and such a manifestation of it accorded with their views and feelings.

But Christ did not condescend to sacrifice the liberty and principles of the gospel, to accommodate the tastes and prejudices of men, but proceeded to show that those outward and showy usages which the Jewish people had long been practising, (partly from the law of Moses, but much more from the traditions and doctrines of men) were now to be laid aside as unsuitable for the new and better dispensation of the gospel. This he did by describing the injudiciousness and impropriety of putting *new wine* into *old bottles*, or a *new piece of cloth* to an *old garment*, since it would be injurious and destructive to both. And so it has proved, that the blending of the law and the gospel, of outward rites and observances, with the precepts of Christianity, has ever been injurious and destructive to pure and genuine Christianity. It has taken from the

liberty and excellency of the gospel, and caused those who have undertaken to unite in any measure the two dispensations, to remain in a cold, hard, and unrenewed condition. Witness the cruel and unrelenting spirit manifested by the Puritans, both in England and in this country, with whom the observance of Sunday originated, and whose descendants are now the most strenuous for enforcing it. Witness also the feelings and principles which at present actuate this class of men, so far as the laws and constitutions of this country will permit. They are ever ready to resort to the secular power to punish such as in any measure depart from their own views of religious duty: and formerly in New England, they cruelly whipped, maimed, and hung sincere and upright individuals, for acting agreeably to the dictates of their own consciences. This was all done professedly for the glory of God, and the good of society, and for the suppression of what they considered heresy. And the same kind of men are now anxious to be at their old work again. They are clamorous for having the United States’ Mail stopped on a day dedicated by the Heathen to one of their gods, and have caused honest and upright individuals in this city, and in an adjoining county, to be prosecuted and fined for doing what was a good, if not a necessary work on that day, when they cannot bring one particle of evidence, either from the Old or New Testament, to show that it is more holy than any other day.

We feel surprised to see the concessions often made to the priesthood, in respect to keeping Sunday, by those opposed to having the mail stopped on that day, and can impute it only to the blindness and ignorance consequent upon listening to the sophistry and tinselled reasonings of a worldly and avaricious priesthood. It is time enough to make such gratuitous and uncalled for concessions to the priesthood, when they can bring some authority from the



New Testament, or from the example of the Apostles and first Christians, to prove that one day, under the gospel dispensation, is to be kept more holy than another, instead of acceding homage to a particular day in distinction from all other days of the week, without any such authority, and to the disparagement and injury of the liberty and spirituality of the gospel. If observing one day in seven is of such great advantage to the world, and to the morals of society, surely three days in the week must be much more so; and in Catholic countries, though Sunday is not accounted a sacred day, yet nearly one half of the days in the year are so accounted, and persons are not allowed to follow their usual occupations on those days. This is particularly the case in South America, and in old Spain, and yet what does the observance of so many sacred days do for the morals of the people, or for the benefit of Christianity? Nearly one half of the time in these countries, is lost to any useful purpose, by means of saint and other holy days, and in no part of the world are the morals of the people in so low and degraded a condition, nor any where else, are people so ignorant and so enslaved by the priesthood. A striking proof that something else besides keeping holy days, is wanting to preserve the morals and virtue of society, and save the people from superstition, degeneracy, and misery.

[From the *Christian Intelligencer*.]

#### ORTHODOX DESIGNS.

I perceive that you, and our editors generally, are in the practice of charging the leaders of orthodoxy with a design to effect a union of Church and State. They on the other hand as positively deny having any such object in view. For several years I have endeavoured to watch their movements for the purpose of ascertaining their aim in the vast schemes in which they have been engaged. I have come to the conclusion, that although they

might desire such a union, and would gladly accept the support of the law to uphold their cause, yet that this is not the object for which they are striving.

Do you inquire then what is their object? I answer, that it is my opinion, they are aiming at establishing themselves over our Government, as completely as the Pope at Rome ever exercised authority over the kingdoms of Europe; and of this there appears to be abundant evidence. Such a scheme is sufficient to fire the ambition of men who aspire to power; and while they are steadily pursuing their object, with a zeal almost unparalleled, they solemnly assert, that they are not aiming at a union of Church and State. And so far I believe them; for I presume, could they effect the object of raising themselves above our Government, they would spurn a union with it, as haughtily as Napoleon in the height of his power, would have rejected the offer of a union with one of his dependent kings.

Let us now look at some evidences that this is the design of the leaders in the great plans of the day. The means by which this scheme is to be completed, appears to be by obtaining an influence over the mass of the people, that they shall always obey them, and through the instrumentality of this influence overawe every one who might oppose their wishes. This machinery has already been put in motion. It has exultingly been said—"The lines are drawn," and every one has been proscribed who would not take sides with them. They have even proceeded so far as to assert, that the common civilities of life ought not to be extended to any who would not conform to their standard of doctrine and practice. And the intention has been expressed of monopolizing various branches of business, so as to ruin all who should not aid them in their measures. In several instances this has been attempted, as in printing, running opposition stages, milk carts, and the

like; and especially the project of a newspaper establishment to force out of circulation all others in our land. Could they but effect only what they have already attempted and openly avowed, they would make a large portion of the people dependent on them. Should any one then dare to oppose their views he would at once be singled out for ruin. Whatever might be his dependence for a support, some means might be devised by which he could be broken down. In this way every election would be governed, and every officer controlled; and a censorship be established over every press in the land, which would be doing little more than the Publishing Committee of the Sunday School Union have already done, in "assuming the immense responsibility of becoming *dictators to the consciences* of millions of immortal beings."

Look at the mighty effort making by means of Sabbath Schools, to bind down the minds of our youth, and secure their implicit obedience to their leaders. See the exertions made to control every institution of learning, and make them subservient to orthodoxy; and the means used to enlist all the young men in our country in that cause. And reflect on the vast sums of money already collected, and at the control of this sect; and in view of all these things, say if the leaders of that party have not a design of swaying an influence over the Government of our beloved country? In fact I have heard such a design avowed in language very direct; the import of which could not surely be mistaken.

I am not convinced that the great body of the orthodox laity are yet engaged in such designs; for they are not probably aware of the tendency of the plans of their leaders; but we fully believe that they are already under a powerful influence, which if it were sufficiently extensive would at once be seized for the accomplishment of those designs.

#### DR. ELY AND THE PHILADELPHIAN.

It seems that "Dr." Ely for want of argument to sustain his cause, occupies a considerable portion of his *Philadelphian* with scurrilous and pretended Reports of meetings, that were never held, except in his own or some correspondent's imagination, in which, according to the Report, he is himself by a resolution of the meeting, required to recant his political and theological principles with, "So HELP ME DEVIL," while all at the meeting are "sworn, some on Thomas Paine's Age of Reason; others on the lids of Theophilus Gates' Reformer; and the rest on Madam Royall's Black Book." The article concludes thus: "The meeting dissolved in *order*, with the exception of a little cursing, swearing, huzzaing, and all that were sufficiently *sober*, retired."

This article was considered so well calculated to show people what kind of materials and weapons this minister of Christ and preacher of the Gospel uses in defending or promoting his cause, that a committee of vigilance in this city, appointed to watch the movements of the clergy, caused many hundred copies to be struck off in hand-bills for general circulation. The committee in heading the article, observe:—"It will serve to show the *tolerant* and *decent* manner, in which all are treated, who dare say ought against the Anti-Republican and Anti-Christian designs of the *Religious Party in Politics*." It should be mentioned, that Senator Johnson comes in for a full share of abuse in this production, and among the proceedings of the fictitious meeting is the following: "*Resolved*, That Senator Johnson is justly entitled to the public approbation of this meeting, for the very artful, and ingenious, and specious manner, in which, in his Report of 1829, by a sophistical combination of trite ideas, he misrepresented the numerous petitions against Sunday Mails; and for his very republican insinuation, that Chris-



tians ought to be content with the enjoyment of their religion, and peaceably to surrender the management of state concerns into other and worthier hands."

In other articles which have appeared in the *Philadelphian*, the most respectable individuals for holding a meeting at West Chester, to remonstrate against stopping the Mail on Sunday, are held up to view in the blackest light, and with all the burlesque of which the human mind is capable. It is but justice, however, to state that when "Dr." Ely was required to give the names of the authors of these *more reprehensible productions*, the credit or rather discredit of them was awarded to one *Dr. Wm. Harris*, a *Mr. Davis*, and *William Latta*, a Presbyterian minister, all living in Chester county, Pennsylvania.

[From the *New Hampshire Democratic Spy*.]

#### PRIESTCRAFT AND A LAW RELIGION.

Of all the tyrants which heaven has permitted to chastise mankind for a season, the most horrid, has been the bloody and inhuman dominion of bigoted priests. In the different ages and governments in which they have had rule, the natural and inherent rights of mankind have been trampled upon, and the inviolable sanctuary of conscience profaned and subjugated. They have always, so far as they had power, commanded by vindictive law and torture, the entire surrender of all moral volition on the part of the people, and forbid, under the penalty of treason, their right to question its propriety, or think for themselves. They are to have the credit for the establishment of the *Auto de Fe*, and the tortures of the Inquisition. To them is due the martyrdoms, by the rack and wheel, and by the scaffold and the stake. When the reason and consciences of mankind are bound with the icy chains of a Theological despotism, they are slaves indeed. What remains of them afterwards, is not

sufficient to elevate them to an equality with the wild men of the woods. All that gave them superiority, was the independent exercise of the rights of conscience and the power to think and reason freely for themselves, and that has, in every age, been forbidden by a dominant priestcraft.

If liberty in this country shall ever be taken from us, depend upon it that priestcraft, aided by the lovers of a law religion, will rob us of that rich boon which we inherit from the valor of our republican fathers. The tempests of party spirit may shake the tree of liberty, but bigoted priests are the canker-worms that will consume its foliage, and wither its branches. In the United States at this moment, the aspiring clergy supported by the wealth and influence of the old tory party, are stretching forth their hands to grasp at civil rule, and to bind with legal fetters, the liberty of conscience. Under the pretension of stopping the Mail one day in seven, they are trying their strength and influence in our national Councils; and if they succeed in this first step, they are ready to take others, until every free religious denomination of Christians must worship their Baal, or suffer such penalties as they choose to prescribe.—When the toleration law, in this State, was passed, they proclaimed that religion was about to be destroyed, thereby saying that no other denomination beside themselves, had any religion. Give them the power, and all other denominations in this country would be annihilated.

[From the *Christian Herald*.]

#### REPUTATION.

It is matter of astonishment to any one who seriously reflects on the subject, to see at what an immense value each individual estimates his own reputation in the circle in which he moves. How few are willing to make a sacrifice here! The sacred writer expresses much when speaking of Christ, saying "He made himself of no reputation." Few will do this for

Christ, even among those who make high pretensions to holiness and self-denial. Jonah, we have reason to believe, was a true prophet of the Lord, yet Jonah was unwilling to hazard his reputation in the path of duty. He was willing to face all the opposition and abuse which might be expected from the unpopularity of the message he was to deliver to the inhabitants of the "great city of Nineveh," which by the way would require no small degree of moral courage; but he was not willing to risk his reputation as a *prophet* on the final result. And after he was prepared by a severe course of discipline to go forward and do his duty, he valued his own reputation more than the salvation of the whole city, on condition of their repentance and turning unto the Lord.

#### HONEST REMARKS.

[Considerable opposition being made in Congress to the printing of Mr. Johnson's report on Sunday Mails, Mr. Johnson concluded some observations upon the subject, in the following language:]

"Since I have been compelled to address you, let me ask what it is that renders the institutions of our country different from those of all others? It is that, in this free land, the thoughts of the humblest citizen are not to be manacled and fettered, nor punished, whether orthodox or not. Mine are not to be: and they never have been—they never shall be. In the faithful discharge of my duty, in such a case as this, I care not, Mr. Speaker, for consequences. Were the whole universe arrayed against me, on a matter like this, a matter of conscience, I care not who is with me, or who is against me, so far as my own opinions and conduct are concerned. Numbers are not to intimidate me, or turn me from my purpose; I should remain, sir, as unchanged, standing alone, as if the whole human family, from the beginning of time down to the present day, flattered me with their applauses. I trust, sir, the report may be printed."

#### MR. JOHNSON'S REPORT.

Some who read Mr. Johnson's able Report, given in this number, may conclude that the clergy will now be put to silence on the subject of stopping the Mail on Sunday. They will find themselves very much mistaken, because they are not suf-

ficiently acquainted with the nature and object of the men with whom these petitions originated. The clergy have no intention ever to abandon the measure till they have accomplished their ends; and it is not unlikely but the whole country may be put into commotion, if a civil war does not ensue, before this business terminates.

The following is an extract of a letter from an intelligent correspondent in Butler county, Ohio, on the subject of stopping the Mails on Sunday:

"There have been several meetings in this county on the Mail Subject, and will be others. The great body of the people are more united in opposition to this unprincipled measure, than I had any conception of. A few Sundays ago, the President of Oxford College, in his sermon, talked of letting blood if it could not be effected without—and those, or many of them who were present, talked, after the meeting was over, of applying Tar and Feathers."

So much for giving money and pampering the priesthood—and yet the people are pouring in their money upon them, and upon their innumerable societies, as though by doing so they would save their own souls and promote the happiness and welfare of the country.

#### IMPRISONMENT FOR DEBT.

An esteemed correspondent at New York, in giving us some information respecting some late meetings in that city for the purpose of abolishing the useless and unchristian practice of *Imprisonment for Debt*, states the fact, that at neither of the meetings a single clergyman was not to be found, with the exception of two or three proscribed as heretics. Our correspondent naturally enough draws the inference that the popular priesthood feel but little sympathy for their fellow beings incarcerated in the dreary walls of a prison, in many instances without the shadow of a crime, except that of poverty or honestly confiding in the pretended honesty of others. We are sorry that we have not room for the judicious and forcible remarks contained in his correspondence. To look for sympathy of feeling, or true charity among a high-minded and pampered priesthood, would be like seeking for the living among the dead.

#### PROPOSED PUBLICATION.

It is proposed by the Editor of the Reformer to commence another periodical work, to be entitled *The Christian*, as soon as a sufficient number of subscribers



are obtained to warrant the undertaking. The primary and principal object of this work will be to show who is the true Christian, and what are the principles, feelings, and practice, which should characterize one claiming that appellation.

The professing world is now almost wholly destitute, not only of Christianity, but also of a knowledge of what Christianity requires, and unless a correct standard of what a Christian should be is presented to the minds of men, in all its bearings and extent, the state of things in all probability will only get worse and worse, until scarcely a particle of pure and genuine Christianity will be left remaining on the earth.

The editor feels that such an undertaking is a very important and responsible one, and in performing it he must expect to come in collision with, and be compelled to condemn a great part of what now passes for Christianity in the world—for what is called Christianity and religion in the present day, is based on no integrity of principle or benevolence of action, but is only a cumbrous load of formal and selfish works, in no way calculated to make mankind either happier or better, and only brings dishonour on the cause of Christ.

That no one may be left in ignorance, or be under any deception, with respect to the course that will be pursued in the proposed publication, the Editor here would frankly state, that according to his views of Christianity, a Christian should never get angry, or harbor one unkind feeling towards any individual, under any provocation whatever; never sue at the law; never indulge one ambitious or selfish thought; and should always act in the strictest sense of the word, fair and just with every human being; and owe no man any thing but love. If any at present are not in such a condition, it should be their greatest concern to attain to it, whatever sacrifices they may be required to make; for it will be their truest wisdom, and the only road to happiness and peace. In a word, every one seeking to be a Christian, ought sincerely and truly aim, as if life and death depended on the issue, to do every thing that is right.

The Editor most sincerely desires to see a right state of things take place in the world. The whole human race now need it, and misery, perplexity, and wretchedness fill the earth in consequence of the want of right feelings and right conduct in mankind, one towards another, and more especially among professed Chris-

tians, who were designed to be as the salt of the earth, and as a city set on a hill, commanding the admiration of, and imparting a salutary and preservative influence over, the whole of society. There is nothing now presented, nothing held forth by any class or body of men, calculated to make mankind better, but every thing seems moving on in a different direction from what is good and right. The Editor will feel bound, honestly and fearlessly, to express himself on these subjects, and if he gives offence it will not be because he wishes to offend, but it will arise from causes over which he can have no control, and to which he must submit from a sincere desire to do good. It will also be the desire of the Editor not to recommend to others what he is not endeavouring to practise himself; for it is but just that every man should be judged by the standard he holds up for another.

Not to be involved at first in too much expense, the work, for the first year, will only be issued once in two months, of the size of the Reformer, at fifty cents a year. Those who are willing to encourage the undertaking, are desired to forward their names, with the payment for the first year, as soon as convenient. It will be best where there are several in a neighbourhood, living at a distance, who subscribe, (the sum being so small) to put the several subscriptions together, that there may be but one postage in forwarding the names and the remittance, which can be shared equally among the subscribers. Where only one name is sent, a dollar can be enclosed, which will pay for the twelve first numbers of the work. Persons procuring ten subscribers, and forwarding the amount, shall be entitled to one copy of the work so long as that number of subscribers are continued, and the amount is regular remitted. We would wish to issue the first number by the first of July, and sooner if the subscription will justify it. Those who desire to aid in the object of the work, by an expression of their views, are requested to forward their communications to the Editor. Postage on all letters must be paid by those sending them. Editors of papers who will insert this prospectus, and forward a paper containing it, shall have twelve numbers of the work sent to them, or the numbers of the Reformer for one year, as they may designate by making the letter C. or R. on their paper.

THEOPHILUS R. GATES.

*Phila. March 30th, 1830.*

### REMOVAL.

The Editor expects to remove his residence by the 7th or 8th of the present month, to 131½ North Second Street, a few doors below Race Street, where it will be more convenient for subscribers to call from its nearer situation to the business part of the city, and where, in connexion with an acquaintance, he purposes opening a store, the better to secure the permanency of this and the new work proposed in this number. His own time, however, will be exclusively devoted to the duties involved in the two publications.

As the Editor's removal will take place so shortly, the imprint below will be altered to suit his future residence.

Two very convenient upper rooms, No. 290 North Third Street, may be obtained at a reasonable rent, of the person where the Editor of this paper has been residing, with much satisfaction, for nearly seven years past. One or two single persons, or a man and his wife, with agreeable dispositions, would find the situation a desirable one. The increase of subscribers, the distance of the place from the Post Office, but more especially the inconvenience complained of by merchants and others, coming to this city, in having to walk so far to subscribe or make payment for themselves, or some of their friends, make it necessary for the Editor to remove lower down.

"*A Friend to Reformation*," is received. Future communications from the same quarter are requested, which may, if not before used, be suitably introduced into "*The Christian*." Should the writer come to this city, a personal interview is solicited. Things are now in a very wrong state almost every where, which causes a great deal of unhappiness and misery throughout society; and every well-wisher to mankind should do all in his power to counteract the evils which abound, and bring things into a better condition. To the suggestion of our correspondent of introducing extracts from the "*Measuring Reed*," into the pages of the Reformer, the Editor would observe, such extracts would be more suited to the object of the new work proposed in this number, entitled, "*The Christian*." The Editor, however, intends keeping for sale at his future residence, the *Measuring Reed*, with another larger work he published before commencing the Reformer. He will also

have a supply of "*The Almost Christian*," and "*Gospel Treasures*," two very valuable books, written by other persons, some hundred years ago, but which he abridged and published at his own expense, solely from an unwillingness to see such interesting and useful works sink into oblivion, being no where to be obtained before he published them.

For the information of those who have never seen the "*Measuring Reed*," the full title may with propriety be here given, viz:

"*A Measuring Reed*, to separate between the Precious and the Vile. In two parts. Part I. Showing what are no certain signs of a renewed or gracious state. Part II. Showing what are distinguishing signs of a truly renewed and gracious state. By Theophilus R. Gates."

The following is the motto: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not. . . . Rev. xi. 1, 2.

If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.

Jer. xv. 19."

Those now on hand are the second edition, with additions.

### FANATICISM.

(From Bishop Warburton.)

Fanaticism is a fire, which heats the mind indeed, but heats without *purifying*. It stimulates and ferments all the passions; but it rectifies none of them: and thus leaving the appetites unsubdued, pride, vanity, and ambition insinuate themselves into the impotent and disordered mind, under the disguise of purity, holiness, and perfection. And while they are at work, religion, which lent them these more honest appellations, will be so far from curbing the owner in the use of *oblique means*, that the strongest influence of fanaticism will be naturally directed to push him upon them, as the best instruments for the ready introduction of what he calls the truth.

The Reformer is printed on the first of each month, at one dollar a year. Letters to be addressed and payment made, to T. R. GATES, Proprietor and principal Editor, No. 131½ North Second Street, Philadelphia. Numbers can be supplied from the commencement of the work.